

ECCE HOMO

BY

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF NIETZSCHE

PREFACE

1

AS it is my intention within a very short time to confront my fellow-men with the very greatest demand that has ever yet been made upon them, it seems to me above all necessary to declare here who and what I am. As a matter of fact, this ought to be pretty well known already, for I have not “held my tongue” about myself. But the disparity which exists between the greatness of my task and the smallness of my contemporaries, is revealed by the fact that people have neither heard me nor yet seen me. I live on my own self-made credit, and it is probably only a prejudice to suppose that I am alive at all. I do but require to speak to any one of the scholars who come to the Ober-Engadin in the summer in order to convince myself that I am not alive. . . . Under these circumstances, it is a duty—and one against which my customary reserve, and to a still greater degree the pride of my instincts, rebel—to say: *Listen! for I am such and such a person. For Heaven's sake do not confound me with any one else!*

2

I am, for instance, in no wise a bogey man, or moral monster. On the contrary, I am the very opposite in nature to the kind of man that has been honoured hitherto as virtuous. Between ourselves it seems to me that this is precisely a matter on which I may feel proud. I am a disciple of the philosopher Dionysus, and I would prefer to be even a satyr than a saint. But just read this book! Maybe I have here succeeded in expressing this contrast in a cheerful and at the same time sympathetic manner—maybe this is the only purpose of the present work.

The very last thing I should promise to accomplish would be to “improve” mankind. I do not set up any new idols; may old idols only learn what it costs to have legs of clay. To overthrow idols (idols is the name I give to all ideals) is much more like my business. In proportion as an ideal world has been falsely assumed, reality has been robbed of its value, its meaning, and its truthfulness. . . . The “true world” and the “apparent world”—in plain English, the fictitious world and reality. . . . Hitherto the *lie* of the ideal has been the curse of reality; by means of it the very source of mankind’s instincts has become mendacious and false; so much so that those values have come to be worshipped which are the exact *opposite* of the

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ones which would ensure man's prosperity, his future, and his great right to a future.

3

He who knows how to breathe in the air of my writings is conscious that it is the air of the heights, that it is bracing. A man must be built for it, otherwise the chances are that it will chill him. The ice is near, the loneliness is terrible—but how serenely everything lies in the sunshine! how freely one can breathe! how much, one feels, lies beneath one! Philosophy, as I have understood it hitherto, is a voluntary retirement into regions of ice and mountain-peaks—the seeking-out of everything strange and questionable in existence, everything upon which, hitherto, morality has set its ban. Through long experience, derived from such wanderings in forbidden country, I acquired an opinion very different from that which may seem generally desirable, of the causes which hitherto have led to men's moralising and idealising. The secret history of philosophers, the psychology of their great names, was revealed to me. How much truth can a certain mind endure; how much truth can it dare?—these questions became for me ever more and more the actual test of values. Error (the belief in the ideal) is not blindness; error is cowardice. . . . Every conquest, every step forward in knowledge, is the outcome of courage, of hardness towards one's self, of cleanliness towards one's self. I do not refute ideals; all I do is to draw on my gloves in their presence. . . . *Nitimur in vetitum*: with this device my philosophy will one day be victorious; for that which has hitherto been most stringently forbidden is, without exception, Truth.

4

In my lifework, my Zarathustra holds a place apart. With it, I gave my fellow-men the greatest gift that has ever been bestowed upon them. This book, the voice of which speaks out across the ages, is not only the loftiest book on earth, literally the book of mountain air—the whole phenomenon, mankind, lies at an incalculable distance beneath it—but it is also the deepest book, born of the inmost abundance of truth; an inexhaustible well, into which no pitcher can be lowered without coming up again laden with gold and with goodness. Here it is not a “prophet” who speaks, one of those gruesome hybrids of sickness and Will to Power, whom men call founders of religions. If a man would not do a sad wrong to his wisdom, he must above all give proper heed to the tones—the halcyonic tones—that fall from the lips of Zarathustra:—

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“The most silent words are harbingers of the storm; thoughts that come on dove’s feet lead the world.

“The figs fall from the trees; they are good and sweet, and, when they fall, their red skins are rent.

“A north wind am I unto ripe figs.

“Thus, like figs, do these precepts drop down to you, my friends; now drink their juice and their sweet pulp.

“It is autumn all around, and clear sky, and afternoon.”

No fanatic speaks to you here; this is not a “sermon;” no faith is demanded in these pages. From out an infinite treasure of light and well of joy, drop by drop, my words fall out—a slow and gentle gait in the cadence of these discourses. Such things can reach only the most elect; it is a rare privilege to be a listener here; not every one who likes can have ears to hear Zarathustra. Is not Zarathustra, because of these things, a *seducer*? . . . But what, indeed, does he himself say, when for the first time he goes back to his solitude? Just the reverse of that which any “Sage,” “Saint,” “Saviour of the world,” and other decadents would say. . . . Not only his words, but he himself is other than they.

“Alone do I now go, my disciples! Get ye also hence, and alone! Thus would I have it.

“Verily, I beseech you: take your leave of me and arm yourselves against Zarathustra! And better still, be ashamed of him! Maybe he hath deceived you.

“The knight of knowledge must be able not only to love his enemies, but also to hate his friends.

“The man who remaineth a pupil requiteth his teacher but ill. And why would ye not pluck at my wreath?

“Ye honour me; but what if your reverence should one day break down? Take heed, lest a statue crush you.

“Ye say ye believe in Zarathustra? But of what account is Zarathustra? Ye are my believers: but of what account are all believers?

“Ye had not yet sought yourselves when ye found me. Thus do all believers; therefore is all believing worth so little.

“Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when ye have all denied me will I come back unto you.”

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ON this perfect day, when everything is ripening, and not only the grapes are getting brown, a ray of sunshine has fallen on my life: I looked behind me, I looked before me, and never have I seen so many good things all at once. Not in vain have I buried my four-and-fortieth year to-day; I had the right to bury it—that in it which still had life, has been saved and is immortal. The first book of the *Transvaluation of all Values*, *The Songs of Zarathustra*, *The Twilight of the Idols*, my attempt to philosophise with the hammer—all these things are the gift of this year, and even of its last quarter. *How could I help being thankful to the whole of my life?*

That is why I am now going to tell myself the story of my life.

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1

THE happiness of my existence, its unique character perhaps, consists in its fatefulness: to speak in a riddle, as my own father I am already dead, as my own mother I still live and grow old. This double origin, taken as it were from the highest and lowest rungs of the ladder of life, at once a decadent and a beginning, this, if anything, explains that neutrality, that freedom from partisanship in regard to the general problem of existence, which perhaps distinguishes me. To the first indications of ascending or of descending life my nostrils are more sensitive than those of any man that has yet lived. In this domain I am a master to my backbone—I know both sides, for I am both sides. My father died in his six-and-thirtieth year: he was delicate, lovable, and morbid, like one who is preordained simply to pay a flying visit—a gracious reminder of life rather than life itself. In the same year that his life declined mine also declined: in my six-and-thirtieth year I reached the lowest point in my vitality—I still lived, but my eyes could distinguish nothing that lay three paces away from me. At that time—it was the year 1879—I resigned my professorship at Bâle, lived through the summer like a shadow in St. Moritz, and spent the following winter, the most sunless of my life, like a shadow in Naumburg. This was my lowest ebb. During this period I wrote *The Wanderer and His Shadow*. Without a doubt I was conversant with shadows then. The winter that followed, my first winter in Genoa, brought forth that sweetness and spirituality which is almost inseparable from extreme poverty of blood and muscle, in the shape of *The Dawn of Day*. The perfect lucidity and cheerfulness, the intellectual exuberance even, that this work reflects, coincides, in my case, not only with the most profound physiological weakness, but also with an excess of suffering. In the midst of the agony of a headache which lasted three days, accompanied by violent nausea, I was possessed of most singular dialectical clearness, and in absolutely cold blood I then thought out things, for which, in my more healthy moments, I am not enough of a climber, not sufficiently supple, not sufficiently cold. My readers perhaps know to what extent I consider dialectic a symptom of decadence, as, for instance, in the most famous of all cases—the case of Socrates. All the morbid disturbances of the intellect, even that semi-stupor which accompanies fever, have, unto this day, remained completely unknown to me; and for my first information concerning their nature and frequency, I was obliged to have recourse to the learned works

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which have been compiled on the subject. My circulation is slow. No one has ever been able to detect fever in me. A doctor who treated me for some time as a nerve patient finally declared: "No! there is nothing wrong with your nerves, it is simply I who am nervous." It has been absolutely impossible to ascertain any local degeneration in me, nor any organic stomach trouble, however much I may have suffered from profound weakness of the gastric system as the result of general exhaustion. Even my eye trouble, which sometimes approached so parlously near to blindness, was only an effect and not a cause; for, whenever my general vital condition improved, my power of vision also increased. Having admitted all this, do I need to say that I am experienced in questions of decadence? I know them inside and out. Even that filigree art of prehension and comprehension in general, that feeling for delicate shades of difference, that psychology of "seeing through brick walls," and whatever else I may be able to do, was first learnt then, and is the specific gift of that period during which everything in me was subtilised—observation itself, together with all the organs of observation. To look upon healthier concepts and values from the standpoint of the sick, and conversely to look down upon the secret work of the instincts of decadence from the standpoint of him who is laden and self-reliant with the richness of life—this has been my longest exercise, my principal experience. If in anything at all, it was in this that I became a master. To-day my hand knows the trick, I now have the knack of reversing perspectives: the first reason perhaps why a *Transvaluation of all Values* has been possible to me alone.

2

For, apart from the fact that I am a decadent, I am also the reverse of such a creature. Among other things my proof of this is, that I always instinctively, select the proper remedy when my spiritual or bodily health is bad; whereas the decadent, as such, invariably chooses those remedies which are bad for him. As a whole I was sound, but in certain details I was a decadent. That energy with which I sentenced myself to absolute solitude, and to a severance from all those conditions in life to which I had grown accustomed; my discipline of myself, and my refusal to allow myself to be pampered, to be tended hand and foot, and to be doctored—all this betrays the absolute certainty of my instincts respecting what at that time was most needful to me. I placed myself in my own hands, I restored myself to health: the first condition of success in such an undertaking, as every physiologist will admit, is that at bottom a man should be sound. An intrinsically morbid nature cannot become healthy. On the other hand, to an intrinsically sound nature, illness may even constitute a powerful stimulus to life, to a surplus of life. It

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is in this light that I now regard the long period of illness that I endured: it seemed as if I had discovered life afresh, my own self included. I tasted all good things and even trifles in a way in which it was not easy for others to taste them—out of my Will to Health and to Life I made my philosophy. . . . For this should be thoroughly understood; it was during those years in which my vitality reached its lowest point that I ceased from being a pessimist: the instinct of self-recovery forbade my holding to a philosophy of poverty and desperation. Now, by what signs are Nature's lucky strokes recognised among men? They are recognised by the fact that any such lucky stroke gladdens our senses; that he is carved from one integral block, which is hard, sweet, and fragrant as well. He enjoys that only which is good for him; his pleasure, his desire, ceases when the limits of that which is good for him are overstepped. He divines remedies for injuries; he knows how to turn serious accidents to his own advantage; that which does not kill him makes him stronger. He instinctively gathers his material from all he sees, hears, and experiences. He is a selective principle; he rejects much. He is always in his own company, whether his intercourse be with books, with men, or with natural scenery; he honours the things he chooses, the things he acknowledges, the things he trusts. He reacts slowly to all kinds of stimuli, with that tardiness which long caution and deliberate pride have bred in him—he tests the approaching stimulus; he would not dream of meeting it half-way. He believes neither in “ill-luck” nor “guilt;” he can digest himself and others; he knows how to forget—he is strong enough to make everything turn to his own advantage.

Lo then! I am the very reverse of a decadent, for he whom I have just described is none other than myself.

3

This double thread of experiences, this means of access to two worlds that seem so far asunder, finds in every detail its counterpart in my own nature—I am my own double: I have a “second” sight, as well as a first. And perhaps I also have a third sight. By the very nature of my origin I was allowed an outlook beyond all merely local, merely national and limited horizons; it required no effort on my part to be a “good European.” On the other hand, I am perhaps more German than modern Germans—mere Imperial Germans—can hope to be—I, the last anti-political German. Be this as it may, my ancestors were Polish noblemen: it is owing to them that I have so much race instinct in my blood—who knows? perhaps even the *liberum veto*.¹ When I think of the number of times in my travels that I have been accosted as a Pole, even by Poles themselves, and how seldom I have been taken for a German, it seems to me as if I

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belonged to those only who have a sprinkling of German in them. But my mother, Franziska Oehler, is at any rate something very German; as is also my paternal grandmother, Erdmuthe Krause. The latter spent the whole of her youth in good old Weimar, not without coming into contact with Goethe's circle. Her brother, Krause, the Professor of Theology in Königsberg, was called to the post of General Superintendent at Weimar after Herder's death. It is not unlikely that her mother, my great grandmother, is mentioned in young Goethe's diary under the name of "Muthgen." She married twice, and her second husband was Superintendent Nietzsche of Eilenburg. In 1813, the year of the great war, when Napoleon with his general staff entered Eilenburg on the 10th of October, she gave birth to a son. As a daughter of Saxony she was a great admirer of Napoleon, and maybe that I am so still. My father, born in 1813, died in 1849. Previous to taking over the pastorship of the parish of Rocken, not far from Lützen, he lived for some years at the Castle of Altenburg, where he had charge of the education of the four princesses. His pupils are the Queen of Hanover, the Grand-Duchess Constantine, the Grand-Duchess of Oldenburg, and the Princess Theresa of Saxe-Altenburg. He was full of loyal respect for the Prussian King, Frederick William the Fourth, from whom he obtained his living at Rocken; the events of 1848 saddened him extremely. As I was born on 15th October, the birthday of the king above mentioned, I naturally received the Hohenzollern names of Frederick William. There was at all events one advantage in the choice of this day: my birthday throughout the whole of my childhood was a day of public rejoicing. I regard it as a great privilege to have had such a father: it even seems to me that this embraces all that I can claim in the matter of privileges—life, the great yea to life, excepted. What I owe to him above all is this, that I do not need any special intention, but merely a little patience, in order involuntarily to enter a world of higher and more delicate things. There I am at home, there alone does my inmost passion become free. The fact that I had to pay for this privilege almost with my life, certainly does not make it a bad bargain. In order to understand even a little of my Zarathustra, perhaps a man must be situated and constituted very much as I am myself—with one foot beyond the realm of the living.

4

I have never understood the art of arousing ill-feeling against myself—this is also something for which I have to thank my incomparable father—even when it seemed to me highly desirable to do so. However un-Christian it may seem, I do not even bear any ill-feeling towards myself. Turn my life about as you may, you will find but seldom—perhaps indeed only once—any trace of some one's having

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shown me ill-will. You might perhaps discover, however, too many traces of good-will. . . . My experiences even with those on whom every other man has burnt his fingers, speak without exception in their favour; I tame every bear, I can make even clowns behave decently. During the seven years in which I taught Greek to the sixth form of the College at Bâle, I never had occasion to administer a punishment; the laziest youths were diligent in my class. The unexpected has always found me equal to it; I must be unprepared in order to keep my self-command.

WHY I WRITE SUCH EXCELLENT BOOKS

Roughly speaking, I seized two famous and, theretofore, completely undefined types by the forelock, after the manner in which one seizes opportunities, simply in order to speak my mind on certain questions, in order to have a few more formulas, signs, and means of expression at my disposal. Indeed I actually suggest this, with most unearthly sagacity, on page 183 of *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Plato made use of Socrates in the same way—that is to say, as a cipher for Plato. Now that, from some distance, I can look back upon the conditions of which these essays are the testimony, I would be loth to deny that they refer simply to me. The essay *Wagner in Bayreuth* is a vision of my own future; on the other hand, my most secret history, my development, is written down in *Schopenhauer as Educator*. But, above all, the *vow* I made! What I am to-day, the place I now hold—at a height from which I speak no longer with words but with thunderbolts—oh, how far I was from all this in those days! But I saw the land—I did not deceive myself for one moment as to the way, the sea, the danger—and success! The great calm in promising, this happy prospect of a future which must not remain only a promise!—In this book every word has been lived, profoundly and intimately; the most painful things are not lacking in it; it contains words which are positively running with blood. But a wind of great freedom blows over the whole; even its wounds do not constitute an objection. As to what I understand by being a philosopher—that is to say, a terrible explosive in the presence of which everything is in danger; as to how I sever my idea of the philosopher by miles from that other idea of him which includes even a Kant, not to speak of the academic “ruminators” and other professors of philosophy—concerning all these things this essay provides invaluable information, even granting that at bottom, it is not “Schopenhauer as Educator” but “Nietzsche as Educator,” who speaks his sentiments in it. Considering that, in those days, my trade was that of a scholar, and perhaps, also, that I understood my trade, the piece of austere scholar psychology which suddenly makes its appearance in this es-

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say is not without importance: it expresses the feeling of distance, and my profound certainty regarding what was my real life-task, and what were merely means, intervals, and accessory work to me. My wisdom consists in my having been many things, and in many places, in order to become one thing—in order to be able to attain to one thing. It was part of my fate to be a scholar for a while.

“HUMAN, ALL-TOO-HUMAN”

1

Human, all-too-Human, with its two sequels, is the memorial of a crisis. It is called a book for free spirits: almost every sentence in it is the expression of a triumph—by means of it I purged myself of everything in me which was foreign to my nature. Idealism is foreign to me: the title of the book means: “Where ye see ideal things I see—human, alas! all-too-human things!” . . . I know men better. The word “free spirit” in this book must not be understood as anything else than a spirit that has become free, that has once more taken possession of itself. My tone, the pitch of my voice, has completely changed; the book will be thought clever, cool, and at times both hard and scornful. A certain spirituality, of noble taste, seems to be ever struggling to dominate a passionate torrent at its feet. In this respect there is some sense in the fact that it was the hundredth anniversary of Voltaire’s death that served, so to speak, as an excuse for the publication of the book as early as 1878. For Voltaire, as the opposite of every one who wrote after him, was above all a grandee of the intellect: precisely what I am also. The name of Voltaire on one of my writings—that was verily a step forward—in my direction. . . . Looking into this book a little more closely, you perceive a pitiless spirit who knows all the secret hiding-places in which ideals are wont to skulk—where they find their dungeons, and, as it were, their last refuge. With a torch in my hand, the light of which is not by any means a flickering one, I illuminate this nether world with beams that cut like blades. It is war, but war without powder and smoke, without warlike attitudes, without pathos and contorted limbs—all these things would still be “idealism.” One error after the other is quietly laid upon ice; the ideal is not refuted—it freezes. Here, for instance, “genius” freezes; round the corner the “saint” freezes; under a thick icicle the “hero” freezes; and in the end “faith” itself freezes. So-called “conviction” and also “pity” are considerably cooled—and almost everywhere the “thing in itself” is freezing to death.

This book was begun during the first musical festival at Bayreuth; a feeling of profound strangeness towards everything that surrounded me there, is one of its first conditions. He who has any notion of the visions which even at that time had flitted across my path, will be able to guess what I felt when one day I came to my senses in Bayreuth. It was just as if I had been dreaming. Where on earth was I? I recognised nothing that I saw; I scarcely recognised Wagner. It was in vain that I called up reminiscences. Tribschen—remote island of bliss: not the shadow of a resemblance! The incomparable days devoted to the laying of the first stone, the small group of the initiated who celebrated them, and who were far from lacking fingers for the handling of delicate things: not the shadow of a resemblance! *What had happened?*²—Wagner had been translated into German! The Wagnerite had become master of Wagner!—*German* art! the German master! German beer! . . . We who know only too well the kind of refined artists and cosmopolitanism in taste, to which alone Wagner's art can appeal, were beside ourselves at the sight of Wagner bedecked with German virtues. I think I know the Wagnerite, I have experienced three generations of them, from Brendel of blessed memory, who confounded Wagner with Hegel, to the “idealists” of the *Bayreuth Gazette*, who confounded Wagner with themselves—I have been the recipient of every kind of confession about Wagner, from “beautiful souls.” My kingdom for just one intelligent word!—In very truth, a blood-curdling company! Nohl, Pohl, and *Kohl*² and others of their kidney to infinity! There was not a single abortion that was lacking among them—no, not even the anti-Semite—Poor Wagner! Into whose hands had he fallen? If only he had fallen among swine! But among Germans! Some day, for the edification of posterity, one ought really to have a genuine Bayreuthian stuffed, or, better still, preserved in spirit—for it is precisely “spirit” that is lacking in this quarter—with this inscription at the foot of the jar: “A sample of the spirit whereon the ‘German Empire’ was founded.” . . . But enough! In the middle of the festivities I suddenly packed my trunk and left the place for a few weeks, despite the fact that a charming Parisian lady sought to comfort me; I excused myself to Wagner simply by means of a fatalistic telegram In a little spot called Klingenbrunn, deeply buried in the recesses of the Böhmerwald, I carried my melancholy and my contempt of Germans about with me like an illness—and, from time to time, under the general title of “The Ploughshare,” I wrote a sentence or two down in my note-book, nothing but severe psychological stuff, which it is possible may have found its way into *Human, all-too-Human*.

That which had taken place in me, then, was not only a breach with Wagner—I was suffering from a general aberration of my instincts, of which a mere isolated blunder, whether it were Wagner or my professorship at Bâle, was nothing more than a symptom. I was seized with a fit of impatience with myself; I saw that it was high time that I should turn my thoughts upon my own lot. In a trice I realised, with appalling clearness, how much time had already been squandered—how futile and how senseless my whole existence as a philologist appeared by the side of my life-task. I was ashamed of this false modesty. . . . Ten years were behind me, during which, to tell the truth, the nourishment of my spirit had been at a standstill, during which I had added not a single useful fragment to my knowledge, and had forgotten countless things in the pursuit of a hodge-podge of dry-as-dust scholarship. To crawl with meticulous care and short-sighted eyes through old Greek metricians—that is what I had come to! . . . Moved to pity I saw myself quite thin, quite emaciated: realities were only too plainly absent from my stock of knowledge, and what the “idealities” were worth the devil alone knows! A positively burning thirst overcame me: and from that time forward I have done literally nothing else than study physiology, medicine, and natural science—I even returned to the actual study of history only when my life-task compelled me to. It was at that time, too, that I first divined the relation between an instinctively repulsive occupation, a so-called vocation, which is the last thing to which one is “called,” and that need of lulling a feeling of emptiness and hunger, by means of an art which is a narcotic—by means of Wagner’s art, for instance. After looking carefully about me, I have discovered that a large number of young men are all in the same state of distress: one kind of unnatural practice perforce leads to another. In Germany, or rather, to avoid all ambiguity, in the Empire,³ only too many are condemned to determine their choice too soon, and then to pine away beneath a burden that they can no longer throw off. . . . Such creatures crave for Wagner as for an opiate—they are thus able to forget themselves, to be rid of themselves for a moment. . . . What am I saying!—for five or six hours.

At this time my instincts turned resolutely against any further yielding or following on my part, and any further misunderstanding of myself. Every kind of life, the most unfavourable circumstances, illness, poverty—anything seemed to me preferable to that undignified “selfishness” into which I had fallen; in the first place, thanks

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to my ignorance and youth, and in which I had afterwards remained owing to laziness—the so-called “sense of duty.” At this juncture there came to my help, in a way that I cannot sufficiently admire, and precisely at the right time, that evil heritage which I derive from my father’s side of the family, and which, at bottom, is no more than a predisposition to die young. Illness slowly liberated me from the toils, it spared me any sort of sudden breach, any sort of violent and offensive step. At that time I lost not a particle of the good will of others, but rather added to my store. Illness likewise gave me the right completely to reverse my mode of life; it not only allowed, it actually commanded, me to forget; it bestowed upon me the necessity of lying still, of having leisure, of waiting, and of exercising patience. . . . But all this means thinking! . . . The state of my eyes alone put an end to all bookwormishness, or, in plain English—philology: I was thus delivered from books; for years I ceased from reading, and this was the greatest boon I ever conferred upon myself! That nethermost self, which was, as it were, entombed, and which had grown dumb because it had been forced to listen perpetually to other selves (for that is what reading means!), slowly awokened; at first it was shy and doubtful, but at last it *spoke again*. Never have I rejoiced more over my condition than during the sickest and most painful moments of my life. You have only to examine *The Dawn of Day*, or, perhaps, *The Wanderer and his Shadow* in order to understand what this “return to myself” actually meant; in itself it was the highest kind of recovery! . . . My cure was simply the result of it.

5

Human, all-too-Human, this monument of a course of vigorous self-discipline, by means of which I put an abrupt end to all the “Superior Bunkum,” “Idealism,” “Beautiful Feelings,” and other effemancies that had percolated into my being, was written principally in Sorrento; it was finished and given definite shape during a winter at Bâle, under conditions far less favourable than those in Sorrento. Truth to tell, it was Peter Gast, at that time a student at the University of Bâle, and a devoted friend of mine, who was responsible for the book. With my head wrapped in bandages, and extremely painful, I dictated while he wrote and corrected as he went along—to be accurate, he was the real composer, whereas I was only the author. When the completed book ultimately reached me—to the great surprise of the serious invalid I then was—I sent, among others, two copies to Bayreuth. Thanks to a miraculous flash of intelligence on the part of chance, there reached me precisely at the same time a splendid copy of the *Parsifal* text, with the following inscription from Wagner’s pen: “To his dear friend Friedrich Nietzsche, from Ri-

chard Wagner, Ecclesiastical Councillor.” At this crossing of the two books I seemed to hear an ominous note. Did it not sound as if two swords had crossed? At all events we both felt this was so, for each of us remained silent. At about this time the first Bayreuth Pamphlets appeared: and I then understood the move on my part for which it was high time. Incredible! Wagner had become pious.

6

My attitude to myself at that time (1876), and the unearthly certitude with which I grasped my life-task and all its world-historic consequences, is well revealed throughout the book, but more particularly in one very significant passage, despite the fact that, with my instinctive cunning, I once more circumvented the use of the little word “I,”—not however, this time, in order to shed world-historic glory on the names of Schopenhauer and Wagner, but on that of another of my friends, the excellent Dr. Paul Réé—fortunately much too acute a creature to be deceived—others were less subtle. Among my readers I have a number of hopeless people, the typical German professor for instance, who can always be recognised from the fact that, judging from the passage in question, he feels compelled to regard the whole book as a sort of superior Réalism. As a matter of fact it contradicts five or six of my friend’s utterances: only read the introduction to *The Genealogy of Morals* on this question—The passage above referred to reads: “What, after all, is the principal axiom to which the boldest and coldest thinker, the author of the book *On the Origin of Moral Sensations*” (read Nietzsche, the first Immoralist), “has attained by means of his incisive and decisive analysis of human actions? ‘The moral man,’ he says, ‘is no nearer to the intelligible (metaphysical) world than is the physical man, for there is no intelligible world.’ This theory, hardened and sharpened under the hammer-blow of historical knowledge” (read *The Transvaluation of all Values*), “may some time or other, perhaps in some future period—1890!—serve as the axe which is applied to the root of the ‘metaphysical need’ of man—whether more as a blessing than a curse to his general welfare it is not easy to say; but in any case as a theory with the most important consequences, at once fruitful and terrible, and looking into the world with that Janus-face which all great knowledge possesses.”⁴

“THE DAWN OF DAY:
THOUGHTS ABOUT MORALITY AS A PREJUDICE”

1

With this book I open my campaign against morality. Not that it is at all redolent of powder—you will find quite other and much nicer smells in it, provided that you have any keenness in your nostrils. There is nothing either of light or of heavy artillery in its com1 position, and if its general end be a negative one, its means are not so—means out of which the end follows like a logical conclusion, not like a cannon-shot. And if the reader takes leave of this book with a feeling of timid caution in regard to everything which has hitherto been honoured and even worshipped under the name of morality, it does not alter the fact that there is not one negative word, not one attack, and not one single piece of malice in the whole work—on the contrary, it lies in the sunshine, smooth and happy, like a marine animal, basking in the sun between two rocks. For, after all, I was this marine animal: almost every sentence in the book was thought out, or rather *caught*, among that medley of rocks in the neighbourhood of Genoa, where I lived quite alone, and exchanged secrets with the ocean. Even to this day, when by chance I happen to turn over the leaves of this book, almost every sentence seems to me like a hook by means of which I draw something incomparable out of the depths; its whole skin quivers with delicate shudders of recollection. This book is conspicuous for no little art in gently catching things which whisk rapidly and silently away, moments which I call godlike lizards—not with the cruelty of that young Greek god who simply transfixed the poor little beast; but nevertheless with something pointed—with a pen. “There are so many dawns which have not yet shed their light”—this Indian maxim is written over the doorway of this book. Where does its author seek that new morning, that delicate red, as yet undiscovered, with which another day—ah! a whole series of days, a whole world of new days!—will begin? In the *Transvaluation of all Values*, in an emancipation from all moral values, in a saying of yea, and in an attitude of trust, to all that which hitherto has been forbidden, despised, and damned. This yea-saying book projects its light, its love, its tenderness, over all evil things, it restores to them their soul, their clear conscience, and their superior right and privilege to exist on earth. Morality is not assailed, it simply ceases to be considered. This book closes with the word “or?”—it is the only book which closes with an “or?”

My life-task is to prepare for humanity one supreme moment in which it can come to its senses, a Great Noon in which it will turn its gaze backwards and forwards, in which it will step from under the yoke of accident and of priests, and for the first time set the question of the Why and Wherefore of humanity as a whole—this life-task naturally follows out of the conviction that mankind does *not* get on the right road of its own accord, that it is by no means divinely ruled, but rather that it is precisely under the cover of its most holy valuations that the instinct of negation, of corruption, and of degeneration has held such a seductive sway. The question concerning the origin of moral valuations is therefore a matter of the highest importance to me because it determines the future of mankind. The demand made upon us to believe that everything is really in the best hands, that a certain book, the Bible, gives us the definite and comforting assurance that there is a Providence that wisely rules the fate of man—when translated back into reality amounts simply to this, namely, the will to stifle the truth which maintains the reverse of all this, which is that hitherto man has been in the worst possible hands, and that he has been governed by the physiologically botched, the men of cunning and burning revengefulness, and the so-called “saints”—those slanderers of the world and traducers of humanity. The definite proof of the fact that the priest (including the priest in disguise, the philosopher) has become master, not only within a certain limited religious community, but everywhere, and that the morality of decadence, the will to nonentity, has become morality *per se*, is to be found in this: that altruism is now an absolute value, and egoism is regarded with hostility everywhere. He who disagrees with me on this point, I regard as infected. But all the world disagrees with me. To a physiologist a like antagonism between values admits of no doubt. If the most insignificant organ within the body neglects however slightly to assert with absolute certainty its self-preservative powers, its recuperative claims, and its egoism, the whole system degenerates. The physiologist insists upon the removal of degenerated parts, he denies all fellow-feeling for such parts, and has not the smallest feeling of pity for them. But the desire of the priest is precisely the degeneration of the whole of mankind; hence his preservation of that which is degenerate—this is what his dominion costs humanity. What meaning have those lying concepts, those handmaids of morality, “Soul,” “Spirit,” “Free will,” “God,” if their aim is not the physiological ruin of mankind? When earnestness is diverted from the instincts that aim at self-preservation and an increase of bodily energy, *i.e.* at an *increase of life*; when anaemia is raised to an ideal and the contempt of the body is construed as “the salvation of the soul,” what is all this if it is not a recipe for decadence? Loss of ballast, resistance offered to natural instincts, selfishness, in fact—

this is what has hitherto been known as morality. With *The Dawn of Day* I first engaged in a struggle against the morality of self-renunciation.

“JOYFUL WISDOM:
LA GAYA SCIENZA”

I

Dawn of Day is a yea-saying book, profound, but clear and kindly. The same applies once more and in the highest degree to La Gaya Scienza: in almost every sentence of this book, profundity and playfulness go gently hand in hand. A verse which expresses my gratitude for the most wonderful month of January which I have ever lived—the whole book is a gift—sufficiently reveals the abysmal depths from which “wisdom” has here become joyful.

“Thou who with cleaving fiery lances
The stream of my soul from its ice dost free,
Till with a rush and a roar it advances
To enter with glorious hoping the sea:
Brighter to see, and purer ever,
Free in the bonds of thy sweet constraint,
So it praises thy wondrous endeavour,
January, thou beauteous saint!”⁵

Who can be in any doubt as to what “glorious hoping” means here, when he has realised the diamond beauty of the first of Zarathustra’s words as they appear in a glow of light at the close of the fourth book? Or when he reads the granite sentences at the end of the third book, wherein a fate for all times is first given a formula? The songs of Prince Free-as-a-Bird, which, for the most part, were written in Sicily, remind me quite forcibly of that Provençal notion of “Gaya Scienza,” of that union of *singer, knight and free spirit*, which distinguishes that wonderfully early culture of the Provençals from all doubtful cultures. The last poem of all, “To the Mistral,”—an exuberant dance song in which, if you please, the new spirit dances freely upon the corpse of morality—is a perfect Provençalism.

“THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA:
A BOOK FOR ALL AND NONE”

1

I now wish to relate the history of *Zarathustra*. The fundamental idea of the work, the *Eternal Recurrence*, the highest formula of a Yea-saying to life that can ever be attained, was first conceived in the month of August 1881. I made a note of the idea on a sheet of paper, with the postscript: “Six thousand feet beyond man and time.” That day I happened to be wandering through the woods alongside of the Lake of Silvaplana, and I halted not far from Surlei, beside a huge rock that towered aloft like a pyramid.

* * *

“I walk among men as among fragments of the future: of that future which I see.

“And all my creativeness and effort is but this, that I may be able to think and recast all these fragments and riddles and dismal accidents into one piece.

“And how could I bear to be a man, if man were not also a poet, a riddle reader, and a redeemer of chance!

“To redeem all the past, and to transform ‘it was’, into ‘thus would I have it’—that alone would be my salvation!”

In another passage he defines as strictly as possible what to him alone “man” can be—not a subject for love nor yet for pity—Zarathustra became master even of his loathing of man: man is to him a thing unshaped, raw material, an ugly stone that needs the sculptors’ chisel.

“No longer to will, no longer to value, no longer to create! Oh, that this great weariness may never be mine!

“Even in the lust of knowledge, I feel only the joy of my will to beget and to grow; and if there be innocence in my knowledge, it is because my procreative will is in it.

“Away from God and gods did this will lure me: what would there be to create if there were gods!

“But to man doth it ever drive me anew, my burning, creative will. Thus driveth it the hammer to the stone.

“Alas, ye men, within the stone there sleepeth an image for me, the image of all my dreams! Alas, that it should have to sleep in the hardest and ugliest stone!

“Now rageth my hammer ruthlessly against its prison. From the stone the fragments fly: what’s that to me?

“I will finish it: for a shadow came unto me—the stillest and lightest thing on earth once came unto me!

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“The beauty of the Superman came unto me as a shadow. Alas, my brethren! What are the—gods to me now!”

Let me call attention to one last point of view. The line in italics is my pretext for this remark. A Dionysian life-task needs the hardness of the hammer, and one of its first essentials is without doubt the *joy even of destruction*. The command, “harden yourselves!” and the deep conviction that all *creators are hard*, is the really distinctive sign of a Dionysian nature.

“BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL: THE PRELUDE TO A PHILOSOPHY OF THE FUTURE”

1

My work for the years that followed was prescribed as distinctly as possible. Now that the yea-saying part of my life-task was accomplished, there came the turn of the negative portion, both in word and deed: the transvaluation of all values that had existed hitherto, the great war—the conjuring-up of the day when the fatal outcome of the struggle would be decided. Meanwhile, I had slowly to look about me for my peers, for those who, *out of strength*, would proffer me a helping hand in my work of destruction. From that time onward, all my writings are so much bait: maybe I understand as much about fishing as most people? If nothing was caught, it was not I who was at fault. *There were no fish to come and bite.*

2

In all its essential points, this book (1886) is a criticism of *modernity*, embracing the modern sciences, arts, even politics, together with certain indications as to a type which would be the reverse of modern man, or as little like him as possible, a noble and yea-saying type. In this last respect the book is a *school for gentlemen*—the term gentleman being understood here in a much more spiritual and radical sense than it has implied hitherto. All those things of which the age is proud—as, for instance, far-famed “objectivity,” “sympathy with all that suffers,” “the historical sense,” with its subjection to foreign tastes, with its lying-in-the-dust before *petits faits*, and the rage for science—are shown to be the contradiction of the type recommended, and are regarded as almost ill-bred. If you remember that this book follows upon *Zarathustra*, you may possibly guess to what system of diet it owes its life. The eye which, owing to tremendous constraint, has become accustomed to see at a great distance—*Zarathustra* is even more far-sighted than the Tsar—is here

forced to focus sharply that which is close at hand, the present time, the things that lie about him. In all the aphorisms and more particularly in the form of this book, the reader will find the same *voluntary* turning away from those instincts which made a *Zarathustra* a possible feat. Refinement in form, in aspiration, and in the art of keeping silent, are its more or less obvious qualities; psychology is handled with deliberate hardness and cruelty—the whole book does not contain one single good-natured word. . . . All this sort of thing refreshes a man. Who can guess the kind of recreation that is necessary after such an expenditure of goodness as is to be found in *Zarasthustra*? From a theological standpoint—now pay ye heed; for it is but on rare occasions that I speak as a theologian—it was God himself who at the end of his great work, coiled himself up in the form of a serpent at the foot of the tree of knowledge. It was thus that he recovered from being a God. . . . He had made everything too beautiful. . . . The devil is simply God's moment of idleness, on that seventh day.

“THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS:
A POLEMIC”

The three essays which constitute this genealogy are, as regards expression, aspiration, and the art of the unexpected, perhaps the most curious things that have ever been written. Dionysus, as you know, is also the god of darkness. In each case the beginning is calculated to mystify; it is cool, scientific, even ironical, intentionally thrust to the fore, intentionally reticent. Gradually less calmness prevails; here and there a flash of lightning defines the horizon; exceedingly unpleasant truths break upon your ears from out remote distances with a dull, rumbling sound—until very soon a fierce tempo is attained in which everything presses forward at a terrible degree of tension. At the end, in each case, amid fearful thunderclaps, a new truth shines out between thick clouds. The truth of the first essay is the psychology of Christianity: the birth of Christianity out of the spirit of resentment, not as is supposed, out of the “Spirit,”—in all its essentials, a counter-movement, the great insurrection against the dominion of noble values. The second essay contains the psychology of conscience: this is not, as you may believe, “the voice of God in man;” it is the instinct of cruelty, which turns inwards once it is unable to discharge itself outwardly. Cruelty is here exposed, for the first time, as one of the oldest and most indispensable elements in the foundation of culture. The third essay replies to the question as to the origin of the formidable power of the ascetic ideal, of the priest ideal, despite the fact that this ideal is essentially detrimental, that it is a will to nonentity and to decadence. Reply: it flourished not because God was active behind the priests, as is generally believed, but because it was a *faute de mieux*—from the fact that hither-

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to it has been the only ideal and has had no competitors. “For man prefers to aspire to nonentity than not to aspire at all.” But above all, until the time of *Zarathustra* there was no such thing as a counter-ideal. You have understood my meaning. Three decisive overtures on the part of a psychologist to a *Transvaluation of all Values*—This book contains the first psychology of the priest.

“THE TWILIGHT OF THE IDOLS: HOW TO PHILOSOPHISE WITH A HAMMER”

1

This work—which covers scarcely one hundred and fifty pages, with its cheerful and fateful tone, like a laughing demon, and the production of which occupied so few days that I hesitate to give their number—is altogether an exception among books: there is no work more rich in substance, more independent, more upsetting—more wicked. If any one should desire to obtain a more rapid sketch of how everything, before my time, was standing on its head, he should begin reading me in this book. That which is called “Idols” on the title page is simply the old truth that has been believed in hitherto. In plain English, *The Twilight of the Idols* means that the old truth is on its last legs.

2

There is no reality, no “ideality,” which has not been touched in this book (touched! what a cautious euphemism!). Not only the eternal idols, but also the youngest—that is to say, the most senile: modern ideas, for instance. A strong wind blows between the trees and in all directions fall the fruit—the truths. There is the waste of an all-too-rich autumn in this book: you trip over truths. You even crush some to death, there are too many of them. Those things that you can grasp, however, are quite unquestionable; they are irrevocable decrees. I alone have the criterion of “truths” in my possession. I alone can decide. It would seem as if a second consciousness had grown up in me, as if the “life-will” in me had thrown a light upon the downward path along which it has been running throughout the ages. The *downward path*—hitherto this had been called the road to “Truth.” All obscure impulse—“darkness and dismay”—is at an end, the “*good man*” was precisely he who was least aware of the proper way.⁶ And, speaking in all earnestness, no one before me knew the proper way, the way upwards: only after my time could men once more find hope, life-tasks, and roads mapped out that lead to cul-

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ture—I am the joyful harbinger of this culture. . . . On this account alone I am also a fatality.

3

Immediately after the completion of the above-named work, and without letting even one day go by, I tackled the formidable task of the *Transvaluation* with a supreme feeling of pride which nothing could equal; and, certain at each moment of my immortality, I cut sign after sign upon tablets of brass with the sureness of Fate. The Preface came into being on 3rd September 1888. When after having written it down I went out into the open that morning, I was greeted by the most beautiful day I had ever seen in the Upper Engadin—clear, glowing with colour, and presenting all the contrasts and all the intermediary gradations between ice and the south. I left Sils-Maria only on the 20th of September. I had been forced to delay my departure owing to floods, and I was very soon, and for some days, the only visitor in this wonderful spot, on which my gratitude bestows the gift of an immortal name. After a journey that was full of incidents, and not without danger to life—as for instance at Como, which was flooded when I reached it in the dead of night—I got to Turin on the afternoon of the 21st. Turin is the only suitable place for me, and it shall be my home henceforward. I took the same lodgings as I had occupied in the spring, 6th Via Carlo Alberto, opposite the mighty Palazzo Carignano, in which Vittorio Emanuele was born; and I had a view of the Piazza Carlo Alberto and above it across to the hills. Without hesitating, or allowing myself to be disturbed for a single moment, I returned to my work, only the last quarter of which had still to be written. On the 30th September, tremendous triumph; the seventh day; the leisure of a god on the banks of the Po.⁷ On the same day, I wrote the Preface to *The Twilight of the Idols*, the correction of the proofs of which provided me with recreation during the month of September. Never in my life have I experienced such an autumn; nor had I ever imagined that such things were possible on earth—a Claude Lorraine extended to affinity, each day equal to the last in its wild perfection.

“THE CASE OF WAGNER: A MUSICIAN’S PROBLEM”

1

In order to do justice to this essay a man ought to suffer from the fate of music as from an open wound—From what do I suffer

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when I suffer from the fate of music? From the fact that music has lost its world-transfiguring, yea-saying character—that it is decadent music and no longer the flute of Dionysus. Supposing, however, that the fate of music be as dear to man as his own life, because joy and suffering are alike bound up with it; then he will find this pamphlet comparatively mild and full of consideration. To be cheerful in such circumstances, and laugh good-naturedly with others at one's self—*ridendo dicere severum*⁸ when the verum dicere would justify every sort of hardness—is humanity itself. Who doubts that I, old artilleryman that I am, would be able if I liked to point my heavy guns at Wagner?—Everything decisive in this question I kept to myself—I have loved Wagner—After all, an attack upon a more than usually subtle “unknown person” whom another would not have divined so easily, lies in the meaning and path of my life-task. Oh, I have still quite a number of other “unknown persons” to unmask besides a Cagliostro of Music! Above all, I have to direct an attack against the German people, who, in matters of the spirit, grow every day more indolent, poorer in instincts, and more honest; who, with an appetite for which they are to be envied, continue to diet themselves on contradictions, and gulp down “Faith” in company with science, Christian love together with anti-Semitism, and the will to power (to the “Empire”), dished up with the gospel of the humble, without showing the slightest signs of indigestion. Fancy this absence of party-feeling in the presence of opposites! Fancy this gastric neutrality and “disinterestedness!” Behold this sense of justice in the German palate, which can grant equal rights to all—which finds everything tasteful! Without a shadow of a doubt the Germans are idealists. When I was last in Germany, I found German taste striving to grant Wagner and the *Trumpeter of Sakkingen*⁹ equal rights; while I myself witnessed the attempts of the people of Leipzig to do honour to one of the most genuine and most German of musicians—using German here in the old sense of the word—a man who was no mere German of the Empire, the master Heinrich Schütz, by founding a Liszt Society, the object of which was to cultivate and spread artful (*listiger* [more cunning: a play on Liszt’s name]) Church music. Without a shadow of doubt the Germans are idealists.

2

But here nothing shall stop me from being rude, and from telling the Germans one or two unpleasant home truths: who else would do it if I did not? I refer to their laxity in matters historical. Not only have the Germans entirely lost the breadth of vision which enables one to grasp the course of culture and the values of culture; not only are they one and all political (or Church) puppets; but they have also actually put a ban upon this very breadth of vision. A man

must first and foremost be “German,” he must belong to “the race;” then only can he pass judgment upon all values and lack of values in history—then only can he establish them. . . . To be German is in itself an argument, “Germany, Germany above all [*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*],” is a principle; the Germans stand for the “moral order of the universe” in history; compared with the Roman Empire, they are the upholders of freedom; compared with the eighteenth century, they are the restorers of morality, of the “Categorical Imperative.” There is such a thing as the writing of history according to the lights of Imperial Germany; there is, I fear, anti-Semitic history—there is also history written with an eye to the Court, and Herr von Treitschke is not ashamed of himself. Quite recently an idiotic opinion *in historicis*, an observation of Vischer the Swabian aesthete, since happily deceased, made the rounds of the German newspapers as a “truth” to which every German *must assent*. The observation was this: “The Renaissance and the Reformation only together constitute a whole—the aesthetic rebirth, and the moral rebirth.” When I listen to such things, I lose all patience, and I feel inclined, I even feel it my duty, to tell the Germans, for once in a way, all that they have on their conscience. Every great crime against culture for the last four centuries lies on their conscience. . . . And always for the same reason, always owing to their bottomless cowardice in the face of reality, which is also cowardice in the face of truth; always owing to the love of falsehood which has become almost instinctive in them—in short, “idealism.” It was the Germans who caused Europe to lose the fruits, the whole meaning of her last period of greatness—the period of the Renaissance. At a moment when a higher order of values, values that were noble, that said yea to life, and that guaranteed a future, had succeeded in triumphing over the opposite values, the values of degeneration, in the very seat of Christianity itself—and even in the hearts of those sitting there—Luther, that cursed monk, not only restored the Church, but, what was a thousand times worse, restored Christianity, and at a time too when it lay defeated. Christianity, the Denial of the Will to Live, exalted to a religion! Luther was an impossible monk who, thanks to his own “impossibility,” attacked the Church, and in so doing restored it! Catholics would be perfectly justified in celebrating feasts in honour of Luther, and in producing festival plays in his honour. Luther and the “rebirth of morality!” May all psychology go to the devil! Without a shadow of a doubt the Germans are idealists. On two occasions when, at the cost of enormous courage and self-control, an upright, unequivocal, and perfectly scientific attitude of mind had been attained, the Germans were able to discover back stairs leading down to the old “ideal” again, compromises between truth and the “ideal,” and, in short, formulas for the right to reject science and to perpetrate falsehoods. Leibnitz and Kant—these two great breaks upon the intellectual honesty of Europe! Finally, at a mo-

ment when there appeared on the bridge that spanned two centuries of decadence, a superior force of genius and will which was strong enough to consolidate Europe and to convert it into a political and economic unit, with the object of ruling the world, the Germans, with their Wars of Independence, robbed Europe of the significance—the marvellous significance, of Napoleon's life. And in so doing they laid on their conscience everything that followed, everything that exists to-day—this sickliness and want of reason which is most opposed to culture, and which is called Nationalism—this *névrrose nationale* [national neurosis] from which Europe is suffering acutely; this eternal subdivision of Europe into petty states, with politics on a municipal scale: they have robbed Europe itself of its significance, of its reason—and have stuffed it into a cul-de-sac. Is there any one except me who knows the way out of this cul-de-sac? Does anyone except me know of an aspiration which would be great enough to bind the people of Europe once more together?

3

And after all, why should I not express my suspicions? In my case, too, the Germans will attempt to make a great fate give birth merely to a mouse. Up to the present they have compromised themselves with me; I doubt whether the future will improve them. Alas! how happy I should be to prove a false prophet in this matter! My natural readers and listeners are already Russians, Scandinavians, and Frenchmen—will they always be the same? In the history of knowledge, Germans are represented only by doubtful names, they have been able to produce only “*unconscious*” swindlers (this word applies to Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel, and Schleiermacher, just as well as to Kant or Leibnitz; they were all mere *weavers of veils*)¹⁰ The Germans must not have the honour of seeing the first upright intellect in their history of intellects, that intellect in which truth ultimately got the better of the fraud of four thousand years, reckoned as one with the German intellect. “German intellect” is my foul air: I breathe with difficulty in the neighbourhood of this psychological uncleanness that has now become instinctive—an uncleanness which in every word and expression betrays a German. They have never undergone a seventeenth century of hard self-examination, as the French have—a La Rochefoucauld, a Descartes, are a thousand times more upright than the very first among Germans—the latter have not yet had any psychologists. But psychology is almost the standard of measurement for the cleanliness or uncleanness of a race. . . . For if a man is not even clean, how can he be deep? The Germans are like women, you can scarcely ever fathom their depths—they haven't any, and that's the end of it. Thus they cannot even be called shallow. That which is called

“deep” in Germany, is precisely this instinctive uncleanliness towards one’s self, of which I have just spoken people refuse to be clear in regard to their own natures. Might I be allowed, perhaps, to suggest the word “German” as an international epithet denoting this psychological depravity?—At the moment of writing, for instance, the German Emperor is declaring it to be his Christian duty to liberate the slaves in Africa; among us Europeans, then, this would be called simply “German.” . . . Have the Germans ever produced even a book that had depth? They are lacking in the mere idea of what constitutes a book. I have known scholars who thought that Kant was deep. At the Court of Prussia I fear that Herr von Treitschke is regarded as deep. And when I happen to praise Stendhal as a deep psychologist, I have often been compelled in the company of German University Professors, to spell his name aloud.

4

And why should I not proceed to the end? I am fond of clearing the air. It is even part of my ambition to be considered as essentially a despiser of Germans. I expressed my suspicions of the German character even at the age of six-and-twenty (see *Thoughts out of Season*, vol. ii. pp. 164, 165)—to my mind the Germans are impossible. When I try and think of the kind of man who is opposed to me in all my instincts, my mental image takes the form of a German. The first thing I ask myself when I begin analysing a man, is, whether he has a feeling for distance in him; whether he sees rank, gradation, and order everywhere between man and man; whether he makes distinctions; for this is what constitutes a gentleman. Otherwise he belongs hopelessly to that open-hearted, open-minded—alas! and always very good-natured species, *la canaille!* But the Germans are *canaille*—alas! they are so good-natured! A man lowers himself by frequenting the society of Germans: the German places every one on an equal footing. With the exception of my intercourse with one or two artists, and above all with Richard Wagner, I cannot say that I have spent one pleasant hour with Germans. Suppose, for one moment, that the profoundest spirit of all ages were to appear among Germans, then one of the saviours of the Capitol would be sure to arise and declare that his own ugly soul was just as great. I can no longer abide this race with which a man is always in bad company, which has no idea of nuances—woe to me! I am a nuance—and which has not *esprit* in its feet, and cannot even walk withal! In short, the Germans have no feet at all, they simply have legs. The Germans have not the faintest idea of how vulgar they are—but this in itself is the acme of vulgarity—they are not even ashamed of being merely Germans. They will have their say in everything, they regard themselves as fit to decide all questions; I even fear that they have

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decided about me. My whole life is essentially a proof of this remark. In vain have I sought among them for a sign of tact and delicacy towards myself. Among Jews I did indeed find it, but not among Germans. I am so constituted as to be gentle and kindly to every one—I have the right not to draw distinctions—but this does not prevent my eyes from being open. I except no one, and least of all my friends—I only trust that this has not prejudiced my reputation for humanity among them? There are five or six things which I have always made points of honour. Albeit, the truth remains that for many years I have considered almost every letter that has reached me as a piece of cynicism. There is more cynicism in an attitude of goodwill towards me than in any sort of hatred. I tell every friend to his face that he has never thought it worth his while to *study* any one of my writings: from the slightest hints I gather that they do not even know what lies hidden in my books. And with regard even to my *Zarathustra*, which of my friends would have seen more in it than a piece of unwarrantable, though fortunately harmless, arrogance? Ten years have elapsed, and no one has yet felt it a duty to his conscience to defend my name against the absurd silence beneath which it has been entombed. It was a foreigner, a Dane, who first showed sufficient keenness of instinct and of courage to do this, and who protested indignantly against my so-called friends. At what German University to-day would such lectures on my philosophy be possible, as those which Dr. Brandes delivered last spring in Copenhagen, thus proving once more his right to the title psychologist? For my part, these things have never caused me any pain; that which is *necessary* does not offend me. *Amor fati* is the core of my nature. This, however, does not alter the fact that I love irony and even world-historic irony. And thus, about two years before hurling the destructive thunderbolt of the *Transvaluation*, which will send the whole of civilisation into convulsions, I sent my *Case of Wagner* out into the world. The Germans were given the chance of blundering and immortalising their stupidity once more on my account, and they still have just enough time to do it in. And have they fallen in with my plans? Admirably! my dear Germans. Allow me to congratulate you.

WHY I AM A FATALITY

I KNOW my destiny. There will come a day when my name will recall the memory of something formidable—a crisis the like of which has never been known on earth, the memory of the most profound clash of consciences, and the passing of a sentence upon all that which theretofore had been believed, exacted, and hallowed. I am not a man, I am dynamite. And with it all there is naught of the founder of a religion in me. Religions are matters for the mob; after

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coming in contact with a religious man, I always feel that I must wash my hands. . . . I require no “believers,” it is my opinion that I am too full of malice to believe even in myself; I never address myself to masses. I am horribly frightened that one day I shall be pronounced “holy.” You will understand why I publish this book beforehand—it is to prevent people from wronging me. I refuse to be a saint; I would rather be a clown. Maybe I am a clown. And I am notwithstanding, or rather *not*withstanding, the mouthpiece of truth; for nothing more blown-out with falsehood has ever existed, than a saint. But my truth is terrible: for hitherto lies have been called truth. The *Transvaluation of all Values*, this is my formula for mankind’s greatest step towards coming to its senses—a step which in me became flesh and genius. My destiny ordained that I should be the first decent human being, and that I should feel myself opposed to the falsehood of millenniums. I was the first to discover truth, and for the simple reason that I was the first who became conscious of falsehood as falsehood—that is to say, I smelt it as such. My genius resides in my nostrils. I contradict as no one has contradicted hitherto, and am nevertheless the reverse of a negative spirit. I am the harbinger of joy, the like of which has never existed before; I have discovered tasks of such lofty greatness that, until my time, no one had any idea of such things. Mankind can begin to have fresh hopes, only now that I have lived. Albeit, I am necessarily a man of Fate. For when Truth enters the lists against the falsehood of ages, shocks are bound to ensue, and a spell of earthquakes, followed by the transposition of hills and valleys, such as the world has never yet imagined even in its dreams. The concept “politics” then becomes elevated entirely to the sphere of spiritual warfare. All the mighty realms of the ancient order of society are blown into space—for they are all based on falsehood: there will be wars, the like of which have never been seen on earth before. Only from my time and after me will politics on a large scale—exist on earth.

2

If you should require a formula for a destiny of this kind that has taken human form, you will find it in my *Zarathustra*.

“And he who would be a creator in good and evil—verily, he must first be a destroyer, and break values into pieces.

“Thus the greatest evil belongeth unto the greatest good: but this is the creative good.”

I am by far the most terrible man that has ever existed; but this does not alter the fact that I shall become the most beneficent. I know the joy of *annihilation* to a degree which is commensurate with my power to annihilate. In both cases I obey my Dionysian nature, which knows not how to separate the negative deed from the

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saying of yea. I am the first immoralist, and in this sense I am essentially the annihilator.

3

People have never asked me as they should have done, what the name of Zarathustra precisely meant in my mouth, in the mouth of the first immoralist; for that which distinguishes this Persian from all others in the past is the very fact that he was the exact reverse of an immoralist. Zarathustra was the first to see in the struggle between good and evil the essential wheel in the working of things. The translation of morality into the realm of metaphysics, as force, cause, end-in-itself, is his work. But the very question suggests its own answer. Zarathustra created this most portentous of all errors—morality; therefore he must be the first to expose it. Not only because he has had longer and greater experience of the subject than any other thinker—all history is indeed the experimental refutation of the theory of the so-called moral order of things—but because of the more important fact that Zarathustra was the most truthful of thinkers. In his teaching alone is truthfulness upheld as the highest virtue—that is to say, as the reverse of the cowardice of the “idealist” who takes to his heels at the sight of reality. Zarathustra has more pluck in his body than all other thinkers put together. To tell the truth and to aim straight: that is the first Persian virtue. Have I made myself clear? . . . The overcoming of morality by itself through truthfulness, the moralist’s overcoming of himself in his opposite—in me—that is what the name Zarathustra means in my mouth.

4

In reality two negations are involved in my title Immoralist. I first of all deny the type of man that has hitherto been regarded as the highest—the good, the kind, and the charitable; and I also deny that kind of morality which has become recognised and paramount as morality-in-itself—I speak of the morality of decadence, or, to use a still cruder term, Christian morality. I would agree to the second of the two negations being regarded as the more decisive, for, reckoned as a whole, the overestimation of goodness and kindness seems to me already a consequence of decadence, a symptom of weakness, and incompatible with any ascending and yea-saying life. Negation and annihilation are inseparable from a yea-saying attitude towards life. Let me halt for a moment at the question of the psychology of the good man. In order to appraise the value of a certain type of man, the cost of his maintenance must be calculated—and

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the conditions of his existence must be known. The condition of the existence of the *good* is falsehood: or, otherwise expressed, the refusal at any price to see how reality is actually constituted. The refusal to see that this reality is not so constituted as always to be stimulating beneficent instincts, and still less, so as to suffer at all moments the intrusion of ignorant and good-natured hands. To consider distress of all kinds as an objection, as something which must be done away with, is the greatest nonsense on earth; generally speaking, it is nonsense of the most disastrous sort, fatal in its stupidity—almost as mad as the will to abolish bad weather, out of pity for the poor, so to speak. In the great economy of the whole universe, the terrors of reality (in the passions, in the desires, in the will to power) are incalculably more necessary than that form of petty happiness which is called “goodness”; it is even needful to practise leniency in order so much as to allow the latter a place at all, seeing that it is based upon a falsification of the instincts. I shall have an excellent opportunity of showing the incalculably calamitous consequences to the whole of history, of the credo of optimism, this monstrous offspring of the *homines optimi*. Zarathustra, the first who recognised that the optimist is just as degenerate as the pessimist, though perhaps more detrimental, says: “*Good men never speak the truth. False shores and false harbours were ye taught by the good. In the lies of the good were ye born and bred. Through the good everything hath become false and crooked from the roots.*” Fortunately the world is not built merely upon those instincts which would secure to the good-natured herd animal his paltry happiness. To desire everybody to become a “good man,” “a gregarious animal,” “a blue-eyed, benevolent, beautiful soul,” or—as Herbert Spencer wished—a creature of altruism, would mean robbing existence of its greatest character, castrating man, and reducing humanity to a sort of wretched Chinadom. *And this some have tried to do. It is precisely this that men called morality.* In this sense Zarathustra calls “the good,” now “the last men,” and anon “the beginning of the end;” and above all, he considers them as the most detrimental kind of men, because they secure their existence at the cost of Truth and at the cost of the Future.

“The good—they cannot create; they are ever the beginning of the end.

“They crucify him who desireth new values on new tables; they sacrifice unto themselves the future; they crucify the whole future of humanity!

“The good—they are ever the beginning of the end.

“And whatever harm the slanderers of the world may do, *the harm of the good is the most calamitous of all harm.*”

Zarathustra, as the first psychologist of the good man, is perforce the friend of the evil man. When a degenerate kind of man has succeeded to the highest rank among the human species, his position must have been gained at the cost of the reverse type—at the cost of the strong man who is certain of life. When the gregarious animal stands in the glorious rays of the purest virtue, the exceptional man must be degraded to the rank of the evil. If falsehood insists at all costs on claiming the word “truth” for its own particular standpoint, the really truthful man must be sought out among the despised. Zarathustra allows of no doubt here; he says that it was precisely the knowledge of the good, of the “best,” which inspired his absolute horror of men. And it was out of this feeling of repulsion that he grew the wings which allowed him to soar into remote futures. He does not conceal the fact that his type of man is one which is relatively superhuman—especially as opposed to the “good” man, and that the good and the just would regard his superman as the *devil*.

“Ye higher men, on whom my gaze now falls, this is the doubt that ye wake in my breast, and this is my secret laughter: methinks ye would call my Superman—the devil! So strange are ye in your souls to all that is great, that the Superman would be terrible in your eyes for his goodness.”

It is from this passage, and from no other, that you must set out to understand the goal to which Zarathustra aspires—the kind of man that he conceives sees reality as it is; he is strong enough for this—he is not estranged or far removed from it, he is that reality himself, in his own nature can be found all the terrible and questionable character of reality: *only thus can man have greatness*.

But I have chosen the title of Immoralist as a surname and as a badge of honour in yet another sense; I am very proud to possess this name which distinguishes me from all the rest of mankind. No one hitherto has felt Christian morality beneath him; to that end there were needed height, a remoteness of vision, and an abysmal psychological depth, not believed to be possible hitherto. Up to the present Christian morality has been the Circe of all thinkers—they stood at her service. What man, before my time, had descended into the underground caverns from out of which the poisonous fumes of this ideal—of this slandering of the world—burst forth? What man had even dared to suppose that they were underground caverns? Was a single one of the philosophers who preceded me a psychologist at all, and not the very reverse of a psychologist—that is

to say, a “superior swindler,” an “Idealist?” Before my time there was no psychology. To be the first in this new realm may amount to a curse; at all events, it is a fatality: *for one is also the first to despise.* My danger is the loathing of mankind.

Have you understood me? That which defines me, that which makes me stand apart from the whole of the rest of humanity, is the fact that I unmasked Christian morality. For this reason I was in need of a word which conveyed the idea of a challenge to everybody. Not to have awakened to these discoveries before, struck me as being the sign of the greatest uncleanness that mankind has on its conscience, as self-deception become instinctive, as the fundamental will to be blind to every phenomenon, all causality and all reality; in fact, as an almost criminal fraud in *psychologicis*. Blindness in regard to Christianity is the essence of criminality—for it is the crime against life. Ages and peoples, the first as well as the last, philosophers and old women, with the exception of five or six moments in history (and of myself, the seventh), are all alike in this. Hitherto the Christian has been *the “moral being,”* a peerless oddity, and, as “a moral being,” he was more absurd, more vain, more thoughtless, and a greater disadvantage to himself, than the greatest despiser of humanity could have deemed possible. Christian morality is the most malignant form of all falsehood, the actual Circe of humanity: that which has corrupted mankind. It is not error as error which infuriates me at the sight of this spectacle; it is not the millenniums of absence of “goodwill,” of discipline, of decency, and of bravery in spiritual things, which betrays itself in the triumph of Christianity; it is rather the absence of nature, it is the perfectly ghastly fact that *anti-nature* itself received the highest honours as morality and as law, and remained suspended over man as the Categorical Imperative. Fancy blundering in this way, not as an individual, *not as a people*, but as a whole species! as *Humanity!* To teach the contempt of all the principal instincts of life; to posit falsely the existence of a “soul,” of a “spirit,” in order to be able to defy the body; to spread the feeling that there is something impure in the very first prerequisite of life—in sex; to seek the principle of evil in the profound need of growth and expansion—that is to say, in severe self-love (the term itself is slanderous); and conversely to see a higher moral value—but what am I talking about?—I mean the *moral value per se*, in the typical signs of decline, in the antagonism of the instincts, in “selflessness,” in the loss of ballast, in “the suppression of the personal element,” and in “love of one’s neighbour” (neighbouritis!) What! is humanity itself in a state of degeneration? Has it always been in this state? One thing is certain, that ye are taught only

the values of decadence as the highest values. The morality of self-renunciation is essentially the morality of degeneration; the fact, “I am going to the dogs,” is translated into the imperative, “Ye shall all go to the dogs”—and not only into the imperative. This morality of self-renunciation, which is the only kind of morality that has been taught hitherto, betrays the will to nonentity—it denies life to the very roots. There still remains the possibility that it is not mankind that is in a state of degeneration, but only that parasitical kind of man—the priest, who, by means of morality and lies, has climbed up to his position of determinator of values, who divined in Christian morality his road to power. And, to tell the truth, this is my opinion. The teachers and leaders of mankind, including the theologians—have been, every one of them, decadents: hence their transvaluation of all values into a hostility towards life; hence morality. *The definition of morality:* Morality is the idiosyncrasy of decadents, actuated by a desire *to avenge themselves with success upon life.* I attach great value to this definition.

8

Have you understood me? I have not uttered a single word which I had not already said five years ago through my mouthpiece Zarathustra. The unmasking of Christian morality is an event which is unequalled in history, it is a real catastrophe. The man who throws light upon it is a *force majeure*, a fatality; he breaks the history of man into two. Time is reckoned up before him and after him. The lightning flash of truth struck precisely that which theretofore had stood highest: he who understands what was destroyed by that flash should look to see whether he still holds anything in his hands. Everything which until then was called truth, has been revealed as the most detrimental, most spiteful, and most subterranean form of life; the holy pretext, which was the “improvement” of man, has been recognised as a ruse for draining life of its energy and of its blood. Morality conceived as *Vampirism*. . . . The man who unmasks morality has also unmasked the worthlessness of the values in which men either believe or have believed; he no longer sees anything to be revered in the most venerable man—even in the types of men that have been pronounced holy; all he can see in them is the most fatal kind of abortions, fatal, *because they fascinate*. The concept “God” was invented as the opposite of the concept life—everything detrimental, poisonous, and slanderous, and all deadly hostility to life, was bound together in one horrible unity in him. The concepts “beyond” and “true world” were invented in order to depreciate the only world that exists—in order that no goal or aim, no sense or task, might be left to earthly reality. The concepts “soul,” “spirit,” and last of all the concept “immortal soul,” were in-

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vented in order to throw contempt on the body, in order to make it sick and “holy,” in order to cultivate an attitude of appalling levity towards all things in life which deserve to be treated seriously, *i.e.* the questions of nutrition and habitation, of intellectual diet, the treatment of the sick, cleanliness, and weather. Instead of health, we find the “salvation of the soul”—that is to say, a *folie circulaire* fluctuating between convulsions and penitence and the hysteria of redemption. The concept “sin,” together with the torture instrument appertaining to it, which is the concept “free will,” was invented in order to confuse and muddle our instincts, and to render the mistrust of them man’s second nature! In the concepts “disinterestedness” and “self-denial,” the actual signs of decadence are to be found. The allurement of that which is detrimental, the inability to discover one’s own advantage and self-destruction, are made into absolute qualities, into the “duty,” the “holiness,” and the “divinity” of man. Finally—to keep the worst to the last—by the notion of the *good* man, all that is favoured which is weak, ill, botched, and sick-in-itself, which ought to be wiped out. The law of selection is thwarted, an ideal is made out of opposition to the proud, well-constituted man, to him who says yea to life, to him who is certain of the future, and who guarantees the future—this man is henceforth called the *evil* one. And all this was believed in as *morality!*—*Ecrasez l’infâme!*

9

Have you understood me? *Dionysus* versus *Christ*.

¹The right which every Polish deputy, whether a nobleman or a *commoner*, possessed of forbidding the passing of any measure by the Diet, was called in Poland the *liberum veto* (in Polish *nie pozwalam*), and brought all legislation to a standstill—Tr.

²Nohl and Pohl were both writers on music; Kohl, however, which literally means cabbage, is a slang expression, denoting superior nonsense—Tr.

³Needless to say, Nietzsche distinguishes sharply between Bismarckian Germany and that other Germany—Austria, Switzerland, and the Baltic Provinces—where the German language is also spoken—Tr.

⁴*Human, all-too-Human*, vol. i., Aph. 37.

⁵Translated for *Joyful Wisdom* by Paul V. Cohn.

⁶A witty reference to Goethe’s well-known passage in the Prologue to *Faust*:

“A good man, though in darkness and dismay,
May still be conscious of the proper way.”

The words are spoken by the Lord—Tr.

⁷A wonderful promenade along the banks of the Po, for which Turin is famous, and of which Nietzsche was particularly fond—Tr.

⁸The motto of *The Case of Wagner*.

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⁹An opera by Nessler which was all the rage in Germany twenty years ago—
Tr.

¹⁰*Schleiermacher* literally means a weaver or maker of veils—Tr.